

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8533

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 9808

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: LUO UNION TAKEN OVER BY ANTI-OGINGA ODINGA FACTION

REF: (A) NAIROBI 5891, (B) NAIROBI 5989, (C) NAIROBI 7576

1. SUMMARY: IN AN EXTRAORDINARY POWER PLAY THE LUO TRIBAL WELFARE ASSOCIATION, LUO UNION, HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY GROUP LOYAL TO VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO AND ADMANTLY OPPOSED TO EX VICE PRESIDENT JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA. END SUMMARY.

2. AT NAIROBI PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 29 NOMINATED MP ODONGO OMAMO ANNOUNCED THAT HE AND ASSOCIATES HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO TAKE OVER THE LUO UNION FOLLOWING SPECIAL MEETING IN KISUMU LAST WEEK ALLEGEDLY ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF MORE THAN 10 LUO UNION BRANCHES. OMAMO ASSERTED THAT PREVIOUS LUO UNION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAD FAILED TO HOLD ELECTIONS FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS AS REQUIRED BY ORGANIZATION'S CONSTITUTION. HE ACCUSED FORMER LEADERSHIP OF FAILING TO INITIATE, ORGANIZE AND IMPLEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AS OTHER SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN  
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KENYA ARE DOING. OMAMO SAID CARETAKER COMMITTEE, WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED BY REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES, HAD BEEN APPOINTED WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WOULD REMAIN IN OFFICE FOR NOT LONGER THAN SIX MONTHS DURING WHICH ELECTIONS FOR NEW LUO UNION LEADERSHIP WOULD BE HELD.

3. ACTION BY OMAMO'S GROUP APPEARS TO BE FAIT ACCOMPLI

ALTHOUGHT FORMER LEADERSHIP GROUP PLANS TAKE MATTER TO COURT. REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES, WHO HAS POWER TO GRANT OR WITHHOLD RECOGNITION TO OFFICE HOLDERS, IS SUBORDINATE TO ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO WHO, BY SEVERAL ACCOUNTS, WAS BEHIND THIS MOVE. A SENIOR MEMBER OF SUSPENDED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 30 THAT GROUP HAD TRIED FOR OVER TWO YEARS TO HOLD LUO UNION ELECTIONS BUT HAD BEEN REFUSED PERMISSION BY GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, HE ALLEGED THAT SOME INDIVIDUALS ON OMAMO CARETAKER COMMITTEE WERE NOT EVEN PAID-UP MEMBERS OF LUO UNION. HE ALSO STATED THAT SPECIAL LUO UNION MEETING ALLEGED TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN KISUMU LAST WEEK WAS BOGUS. PARTICIPANTS HAD NO STANDING IN BRANCHES THEY SUPPOSEDLY REPRESENTED.

4. COMMENT: TAKE OVER OF LUO UNION BY PRO-MOI-NJONJO LUOS REPRESENTS ANOTHER BLOW AIMED AT ODINGA AND HIS SUPPORTERS. WHILE LUO UNION IS MANIFESTY A TRIBAL WELFARE GROUP AND SUPPOSEDLY NOT ENGAGED IN POLITICS, IT HAS OVER PAST FEW YEARS TAKEN ON CONSIDERABLE POLITICL ROLE. ITS LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN OPENLY WORKING TO WIN APPROVAL FOR ODINGA'S RETURN TO POLITICS. AT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KENYATTA MARCH 3 THEN LUO UNION CHARIMAN PAUL MBUYA ASKED FOR REMOVAL OF ISAYA CHELUGAT(MOI'S MAN) AS PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER OF NYANZA PROVINCE (REF A). MBUYA APPARENTLY ALSO WON KENYATTA'S AGREEMENT TO RECEIVE CONFIDENTIAL

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MASSIVE DELEGATION OF LUOS AT STATE HOUSE. MOI-NJONJO GROUP WERE ABLE TO DEFLECT THAT MANEUVER (REF B), BUT APPARENTLY DETERMINED THEREAFTER THAT INCUMBENT LUO UNION LEADERSHIP REPRESENTED A THORN IN THEIR SIDE WHICH HAD TO BE EXORCISED.

5. RESULT OF LUO UNION TAKE OVER, ASSUMING IT STANDS, IS THAT ODINGA GROUP NO LONGER HAS A LEGITIMATE ORGANIZATION THROUGH WHICH TO BRING INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON NATIONAL AND MORE PARTICULARLY ON NYANZA PROVINCE DEVELOPMENTS. ACTIVITIES SUCH AS FUND RAISING MEETINGS, WHICH ALSO SERVED POLITICAL PURPOSES, CAN NO LONGER BE HELD BY THIS GROUP UNDER LUO UNION GUISE. THIS CAN HAVE CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE IN TERMS OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TO TAKE PLACE NEXT YEAR. IF IT WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR AFTER FAILURE OF RECENT FIASCO IN NAKURU WHEN ODINGA AND CHIENG ONEKO WERE NOT ALLOWED INTO STATE HOUSE, AND MEETING WITH PRESIDENT WAS USURPED BY ESTABLISHMENT GROUP, IT IS NOW ENTIRELY CLEAR THA MOI, NJONJO AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WILL USE EVERY TACTIC FAIR OR FOUL AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO NEUTRALIZE ODINGA'S POTENTIAL POLITICAL STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE.

6. THE QUESTION THAT REMAINS IS HOW FAR CAN THE LUOS  
BE PUSHED WITHOUT PROVOKING A STRONG REACTION. AS EMBASSY  
HAS REPORTED MANY TIMES, LUO COMMUNITY IN GENERAL RESENTS  
MANNER IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM POLITICAL  
LIMELIGHT SINCE TOM MBOYA'S ASSASSINATION AND ODINGA'S  
ARREST IN 1969. BUT THEY HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING  
ABOUT IT. AS WAS POINTED OUT TO EMBOFF BY MEMBER OF  
KENYATTA FAMILY WHO IS BASICALLY SYMPATHETIC TO  
REASSERTION BY LUO COMMUNITY OF BIGGER ROLE IN NATION'S  
POLITICAL LIFE, LUO'S DO NOT COUNT FOR VERY MUCH WHERE  
REAL POWER IN KENYA IS CONCERNED. TRIBE IS REPRESENTED  
TO MINIMAL DEGREE IN MILITARY AND GSU OFFICER CORPS, AND  
IS TRULY INFLUENTIAL ONLY IN UNVERSITY, WHERE MORE THAN  
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ANYWHERE ELSE IN KENYA CONSIDERATIONS OF TRIBE ARE MUTED  
BY COSMOPOLITAN EVOLED ENVIRONMENT(REF C). IN ALL  
LIKELIHOOD THERE IS NOTHING THE LUOS CAN EFFECTIVELY DO  
TO ASSERT THEMSELVES AT THIS TIME. BUT WHEN  
INEVITABLE POLITICAL TRANSITION TO INHERENTLY LESS  
STABLE POST-KENYATTA PERIOD BEGINS, THIS FURTHER SLIGHT  
WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN BY ALREADY EMBITTERED  
LUO GROUP.  
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